Why We Learn

THE ARABIC LANGUAGE

AN ESSAY ON THE MANIFOLD IMPORTANCE OF THE ARABIC LANGUAGE CONSIDERED FROM THE VIEW-POINT OF ISLAMIC RELIGION, SEMITIC PHILOLOGY, ROMANCE PHILOLOGY, BIBLICAL STUDIES, HISTORY OF SCIENCE AND CIVILIZATION, JEWISH AND CHRISTIAN LIFE, ETC.

by
SHAIKH INAYATULLAH
M.A. (PANJAB); PH. D. (LONDON)
Formerly Professor of Arabic in the University of the Panjab

Foreword by
SIR HAMILTON GIBB

★

SH. MUHAMMAD ASHRAF
KASHMIRI BAZAR - LAHORE (Pakistan)

اللسان المبين

مَا عَلِمْنَا لِغَيْرِهِمْ مِنْ لِسَانٍ
زَالَ أَهْلُوهُ وَهُوَ فِي إِقْبَالِ
بَلِيَتْ هَاشِمٌ وَبَادَتْ نِزَارُ
وَاللِّسَانُ الْمُبِينُ لَيْسَ بِبَالِ

(احمد شوقی بک)

DIE SPRACHE DER ARABER

"Die Sprache der Araber zählt zu den grössten Wunderwerken des sprachbildenden Menschengeistes"—Dr. Eduard Sachau, Antrittsrede vom 30.6.1887, Sitzungsberichte der Preussischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, Berlin, 1887, Band xxxiii, S. 644.

The pregnant words of Professor Sachau as quoted above may be paraphrased into English as follows:

"The language of the Arabs is reckoned as one of the greatest and most wonderful products of the human mind in the field of language construction."

(In his Inaugural Address delivered before the German Academy of Sciences, Berlin, on the 30th June, 1887).

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KASHMIRI BAZAR - LAHORE

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FOREWORD TO THE THIRD EDITION BY SIR HAMILTON GIBB

IN the rapidly changing conditions of our day, when social and economic problems force themselves insistently on our attention, it is more necessary than ever before to give serious thought to the moral and intellectual foundations of community life. Each generation has to answer the questions so raised in the light of its own experiences and needs. The answers given by our fathers and forefathers may be no longer relevant for us, and we must think them out afresh.

"Why should we study the Arabic language?" is one of these questions. There are many who will answer only "Why indeed?" and pass on to what they regard as more urgent matters. They will always be the majority, for it is of little use to study Arabic, or anything else, unless one is prepared to give the time, and to make the effort to study it thoroughly. In the modern world there are so many branches of knowledge, skills and techniques, which every society needs and which call for specialized, and intensive training. In competition with these demands,

often more insistent and more seductive, what claim can the study of Arabic make, in a country like Pakistan, other than the claims of any branch of academic learning? what is its relevance to the problems of today?

To these questions Dr. Inayatullah has offered an answer in this thoughtful and reasoned pamphlet. I need not try to repeat or to summarize the arguments which he has set out; but after first urging those into whose hands this comes to read and to ponder them carefully, I take this opportunity to state briefly the reasons why the study of Arabic appears to me to have a special claim upon the educated leaders of any Muslim country at this juncture.

The first reason lies, paradoxically, in the very multitude of competing claims. To be sure, history, geography, medicine, mathematics, economics, philosophy, the natural sciences and all the technical arts are needed as well. But a society exists not only in the present and the future; it exists also in the past, and no society can cut itself off from its roots and live. In former days, possibly, too much attention was given to the past, and Arabic was studied too

much as a formal philological and scholastic discipline. In our day, Arabic studies have acquired a deeper meaning; they stand now for the appreciation of what Muslim civilization was and is, in all its aspects. Ne other Islamic language can supply this—not Persian, with all its rich literature, nor Turkish nor Urdu—for the essential sources lie in Arabic alone. No one can hope to grasp the human endeavour and the great variety of elements that have entered into the making of Muslim culture, or to comprehend what Muslim culture really is, unless he pursues his quest through the medium of Arabic. The more that other interests obtrude themselves upon the attention of every society, the more necessary it is that some, at least, of those whose task it is to mould the thought and guide the destinies of a Muslim society in the world of today should have a full and clear understanding of its roots. Only so can society maintain that continuity which is as essential for its spiritual life as the succession of generations is for its physical life.

The second reason is the complement of the first. Amidst all the needs, anxieties and con-

flicting impulses and passions of the day, the men and women of our generation can find no sure foothold in the present. To see things in proportion, to distinguish the superficial and temporary from the fundamental and abiding, to adjust the social structure to new demands without recourse to hasty improvisation, to keep oneself and one's society from being swept away by every passing current, all this calls for both depth and breadth of judgement. Breadth of view comes from a knowledge of the forces at work in the comtemporary world. But depth of view comes only from an understanding of history ; and history in this sense means the history of one's own society and all that has gone into it. Some knowledge of the history of Europe and America may be necessary for the understanding of the modern world, that is, for breadth of view ; but it will not help in evaluating the problems and situations with which a Muslim society is faced and in finding the solutions for them in terms of Muslim culture. On the contrary, it may only be a temptation to short cuts that prove disastrous.

For these two reasons, the study of Arabic emains and will long remain, the basis of sound

judgement and of a truly progressive development within a Muslim society. Its practical advantages for intercourse with the countries of the Middle East need no elaboration. But the student of Arabic will reap on his way many other advantages, both moral and aesthetic, from his progress through the rich fields of Arabic literature; as to these, Dr. Inayatullah will be his guide in the following pages.

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PREFACE TO THE THIRD EDITION

THE first edition of this booklet was issued in 1942 ; and in the intervening years its subject has steadily maintained its importance and interest. For the present edition, the text has been carefully revised, and a number of new paragraphs have been incorporated in several sections, so as to strengthen the arguments set out in them. Two new sections have been added: one on the "Fitness of Arabic for scientific purposes," and the other on the "Future of the Arabic Language."

It is my pleasant duty to tender my sincere gratitude to my revered master Sir Hamilton Gibb, the *doyen* of British Arabists, for the Foreword, which he has kindly written for the present edition. In it he has shown, in his own characteristic and forceful manner, why the study of Arabic appears to him to have a special claim upon the educated leaders of any Muslim community at the present juncture. His wise words should sink into the minds of our educationists and leaders of public opinion.

I also wish to express my thanks to my publisher, Sh. Muhammad Ashraf, who readily agreed to bring out the third edition of this booklet in its revised and enlarged form. In this way, he has given a fresh proof of his well-known zeal for the publication of Islamic literature.

Helpful comments and criticism will be gratefully received.

SH. INAYATULLAH

12, Gulbarg Road,
Lahore :
19th October, 1969.

PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION

THE re-issue of this booklet has given me the welcome opportunity of introducing a number of minor corrections and improvements, some of which were suggested by my esteemed friend and colleague, Dr. Mohammad Sadiq, to whom I offer my heart-felt thanks. I regret to say that I have been so pressed for time since the first appearance of this Essay in book form last July, that I have not been able to expand it along certain lines, which I had in mind or which were suggested to me by some kind friends. I hope it may be possible to enlarge it by the time the next edition is called for.

SH. INAYATULLAH

Lahore:
May 1st, 1943.

PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION

SEVERAL distinguished scholars in the past have left impelled for various reasons to demonstrate the importance of Arabic language and literature. Each of them has naturally viewed the subject according to his own lights, in response to the needs of his own particular age and country. William Bedwell (1561-1632), the father of Arabic studies in England, was probably the first English Orientalist to deal with the subject. He wrote an excellent essay, in which he showed the importance of Arabic and emphasized the urgent need of its study as the language of a great religion. He also stressed its importance as the language of administration and commerce throughout the Arabic world; and besides referred to its literary and scientific value. Edmund Castell (1606-1685), one of the earliest professors of Arabic at Cambridge and the author of the first Comparative Lexicon of Semitic Languages, also wrote on the value of Arabic studies. Similarly Edward Pococke (1604-1691) the first professor of Arabic at Oxford, began his course of lectures

there in 1636 with a discourse on the importance of Arabic language and literature. The eminent Dutch Orientalist, Albert Schultens (1686-1750) stressed one particular aspect of Arabic studies. In his dissertation on the 'Use of Arabic in the Interpretation of Scripture' (1706), he showed how Biblical phraseology and mode of thought could be illustrated by reference to the language and literature of the Arabs.

Coming down to our own times, we find that Sir Thomas Arnold (1864-1930) in a public lecture, delivered by him at the School of Oriental Studies, London, in March 1917, emphasized the need of an impartial study of Islam in view of the large number of Muslims in the British Empire, and showed that Islam and the Islamic world could not be properly understood without an adequate knowledge of Arabic, which is indispensable for 'any understanding of the thoughts that sway the lives of Muhammadan peoples, of the beliefs that they hold most sacred, and the principles of theology and ethics on which they are nurtured.'

With the exception of Dr. Arnold's lecture, almost all the other writings mentioned above

are now out of print; and being extremely rare have been inaccessible to me here in India, while I was engaged on the present Essay, which has grown out of a 'paper,' which I read on the "Importance of the Arabic Language" before the Panjab University Arabic and Persian Society in February 1938, and which was subsequently published in *Islamic Culture* (Hyderabad), vol. xii (1938), pp. 277-87. The intrinsic interest and importance of the subject induced several competent scholars to take notice of the paper in its published form, and express their generous appreciation of the modest effort I had made on behalf of Arabic studies. My special thanks in this connection are due to Professor H. A. R. Gibb (Oxford University), Fräulein Dr. Ilse Lichtenṣtädter (New York), Dr. Muhammad Hamidullah (Osmania University), and Professor Dr. Husain F. al-Hamdani (Bombay University), who were good enough to favour me with their critical remarks and call my attention to a number of errors which had somehow crept into my writing. I was able to benefit by their criticism in the preparation of an amplified Urdu version of my 'paper,' which appeared in the *Supplement*

to the *Oriental College Magazine* (Lahore) for February, 1942.

The sympathetic interest which learned friends far and near were good enough to display in my paper, has been a source of deep gratification to me, and has encouraged me to pursue the subject further. I venture to hope that my inquiry has yielded some interesting results, and has brought to light certain aspects of the importance of Arabic language and literature, which I am afraid have not hitherto received due emphasis. The average educated man has a hazy notion that Arabic is important as the scriptural language of the Muslims; but beyond this he seems to know very little about it. I have tried to show that Arabic though it started on its world-wide career as the language of uncouth Bedouins, grew into the vehicle of the brilliant Islamic civilization; and that whereas it is primarily important as the religious language of the Muslims, it has in the course of time developed many other aspects of great significance, which entitle it to our serious study. It has been my endeavour to put the whole subject upon a sound, scientific basis. As for the result, I leave it to

the judgment of the discerning reader. The footnotes which I have added will, I hope, help the student to pursue some of the topics discussed here still further; they will at the same time also indicate some of the sources I have tapped in the course of my inquiry.

My object in publishing the present Essay has been to call the attention of my fellow-students as well as that of the general reader to the manifold value of Arabic for both humanist and scientific studies; and to help to form a body of well-informed public opinion in favour of its study. I shall be grateful for any helpful criticism or suggestions which kind readers may care to send to me regarding the subject-matter of this Essay.

I feel it is my duty to thank the printers for the minute care they have given to the printing of this booklet which presented some typographical difficulties, and for the unusual promptness with which they have executed the task entrusted to them.

I am sending out this little book into the world in the hope that it may make many friends for itself as well as for me.

SH. INAYATULLAH

Government College,
Lahore :
July 1st, 1942.

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ARABIC A LIVING LANGUAGE

CONSIDERED from the point of view of philology as well as general human culture, the Arabic language is one of the most important languages of the world. Next to English and Spanish, it is the third most widely spoken language of the globe in the extent of its geographical distribution. The Arab conquests of the 7th and 8th centuries and the subsequent Arabic-Islamic cultural influences carried the Arabic language to the most distant countries outside Arabia; and in one form or another it is spoken (sometimes along with other minor languages) in Mesopotamia, Syria, Palestine, Egypt, Malta, North Africa, and in certain districts further south, *e.g.*, in the Sudan, Nigeria, the Western Sahara and Zanzibar. In most of these lands, Arabic is the language of religion, literature, administration and commerce. Arabic was formerly spoken in Spain, which made

very important contributions to Arabic literature,[1] in the Balearic islands and Sicily,[2] in the island of Pantelleria and in Madagascar.

It is true that even in Arabia itself, the Arabic language shows dialectic differences; and such variations are still more marked in countries remote from the land of its origin; but the written language, the language of literature and journalism, has invariably conformed to the old standard type, which has been conveniently called the Classical Arabic, characterized by an extraordi-

1. Not to mention al-Maqqarī's great and well-known work, *Nafḥ al-Ṭib*, which is our principal source for the literary history of Muslim Spain, I may refer the interested reader to the invaluable and unique monograph of theSpanish Orientalist, Prof. Gonzalez Palencia, entitled *Historia de la Literatura Arabigo-Espanola* (Barcelona, 1928, revised ed. 1945), which surveys the whole field of Arabic litrature produced in Muslim Spain and incorporates the results of the latest researches of the modern school of Spanish Arabists.

2. The Arabs ruled over Sicily and parts of southern Italy for about two hundred years; though their cultural influence endured long after the end of their political power. For the Arabic writers and poets who flourished in Sicily, the reader may consult A. F. von. Schack, *Poesie und Kunst der Araber in Spanien und Sicilien*, 2 vols. (2nd ed., Stuttgart, 1877); Michele Amari, *Storia dei Musulmani di Sicilia*, 2nd edition revised and enlarged by Carlo Nallino, 3 vols. (Catania, 1933-38); Saiyid Riyāsat 'Alī, *Tarikh Siqilliya* (in Urdu), 2. vols. (Azamgarh, 1933-36); and the relevant sections in Carl Brockelmann, *Geschichte der Arabischen Litteratur. Zweite den Supplementbanden angepasste Auflage* (Leiden, 1943-49).

nary richness of vocabulary and the logical, systematic character of its grammatical structure. Although Classical Arabic has passed through various stages of development, and its vocabulary and forms of expression have undergone considerable modifications, in accordance with the demands of a progressive civilization and the special needs of different branches of knowledge, it would still be correct to say that the grammatical structure of the language, as written by educated persons in the Arabic world to-day, is essentially the same as that of the language of the Qur'ān and the ancient Arab poets. It will thus be seen that whereas its rich literature places the Arabic language among the principal literary languages of the world, it is at the same time an important living language of mankind, living not only in its influence on the minds of men but as a widely spoken language, which is in use, in one form or another, over a large part of the world, from the banks of the Tigris to the shores of the Atlantic.[1]

1. On the present distribution of the Arabic-speaking peoples and the centres of Arab cultural influence, see the exceedingly valuable study of Prof. Louis Massignon, *Eléments Arabes et Foyers d'Arabisation : Leur Rôle dans le Monde Musulman Actuel*, in *Revue du Monde Musulman*, vol. lvii (Paris, 1924), pp. 1-157.

ARABIC AS THE RELIGIOUS LANGUAGE OF THE MUSLIMS

Arabic is of supreme importance as the religious language of the Muslims, who constitute about one-sixth of the human race. The Qur'ān and the Traditions of the Prophet, which are the two main fountain-heads of the religious and cultural life of Islam, are in Arabic. The same remark applies to their numerous satellite disciplines. Translations into other languages, however painstaking and accurate, cannot be of much use in a first-hand study of Islamic faith and civilization. Any serious student of religious history who desires to specialize in the study of Islam and wants to understand the religious character of the Muslim society must learn Arabic. Religion enters into the daily life of the Muslims to such a great extent that even those peoples, with whom Arabic is not the mother-tongue, become more or less familiar with the Arabic language through religious usages and ceremonial. Again and again in the Qur'ān emphasis is laid on the fact that the Word of God has been revealed in the Arabic language; and from one end of the Muslim world to the other, whatever may be the

living speech of the people—whether it be Berber, Hausa, Pashto, Persian, Turkish, Urdu, Javanese or Malay—prayers are everywhere repeated five times a day in Arabic; the faithful greet one another in familiar Arabic phrases; and the sacred text, though translated into many other languages, is read in the original Arabic. The Arabic words of the Islamic creed (*Lā ilāha ill' Allāh, Muḥammad Rasūl Allāh*) are whispered in the ears of the new-born babe; these are among the first sentences the growing child is taught to utter; and these should be the last words on the lips of the dying. In every city, town and village throughout the Muslim world, the silence of the early dawn is broken by the solemn and melodious chanting of the Arabic a<u>dh</u>ān, with which the mu'a<u>dh</u><u>dh</u>in calls the Faithful to the morning prayers. Thus, the first words which fall upon the ears of the Believers every morning are those of the Arabic language. In non-Arabic countries, Arabic may be a foreign tongue; but it is studied there by all the learned, and the learned (*'Ulamā'*) constitute whatever clergy Islam possesses, and from them the unlettered multitudes derive their knowledge of their faith and, incidentally, some familiarity with the language

which is indissolubly associated with the faith.

The knowledge of the Arabic language is also indispensable for any serious student of religious history, who desires to make a special study of Islam, wants to understand properly the religious basis of the Muslim society and fathom its motive-springs. Not only its religious code (the Qur'ān) and the Apostolic Traditions (*Ḥadīth*) are in Arabic ; but the numerous auxiliary religious sciences also were at first redacted in that language. Translations into other languages, however painstaking and accurate, cannot be of much use in a first-hand study of the Islamic faith and of the society that it nurtured on it. The religion of Islam claims to speak with authority in the domain of law, politics and social organization as much as in the sphere of theology and ethics ; so that religious considerations enter into the individual and corporate life of the Muslims to a greater extent than is perhaps the case with any other community on the surface of the earth. Islam has, accordingly, been justly described as a Church-State, that is, a state whose very constitution is ecclesiastical, in which the Church comes first and the State rests upon it. And here comes in the importance of Arabic. Without

Arabic, Islam would be only imperfectly intelligible. For any understanding of the thoughts that sway the lives of the Muslims, of the beliefs they hold most sacred and the principles of theology and ethics in which they are brought up, we must have recourse to Arabic, which is the original and main repository of all the religious sciences of Islam.[1]

ARABIC AN INTERNATIONAL LANGUAGE

Besides the religious aspect of the importance of Arabic, the written language is also of the utmost value to the Muslims of the world as a great cultural link and medium of communication among them. Islam gives to every believer the sense of common fellowship in its universal brotherhood. Next in importance to the faith of Islam comes Arabic as an instrument, as well as a symbol and expression of whatever measure of unity and corporate feeling at present exists among the far-flung Muslim populations of the world. This kinship of spirit and community of

1. In demonstrating the importance of Arabic as the religious language of Islam, I have freely drawn upon the public lecture delivered by my revered master, the late Professor Sir Thomas Arnold, at the School of Oriental Studies, London, on March 14th, 1917. It was later published in the Bulletin of the said School, vol. i, pp. 106-117, under the heading "The Study of Arabic."

culture could not have been achieved without a common language. And here comes in the importance of Arabic, which has supplied the requisite medium of communication between the various Muslim peoples of the world. Thus the growth of Islamic culture, which holds within its embrace peoples of diverse races and regions, has been promoted by the use of Arabic as the common language of religion and learning. Arabic has exercised an influence second only to that of Islam itself in bringing about that solidarity of sentiment which is so conspicuous in the Muslim world. Arabic is studied more or less extensively in all the Muslim lands,[1] and it lies with the Muslims themselves to strengthen this bond of union by promoting the study of Arabic among them with greater zeal than is the case at present. The international character and position of Arabic is a fact that is, indeed, pregnant with great possibilities, only if the Muslims realized it and seized the opportunities that lie in this direction.

As I have already pointed out, classical

1. I leave out of account the numerous seats of learning in non-Muslim countries, where Arabic is studied for political, commercial, missionary or scientific purposes.

Arabic is the language of business, literature, education and journalism in all the Arabic-speaking countries, from Iraq in the east to Morocco in the west; and despite a few minor local peculiarities, it serves the purpose of a common language throughout the Arab world. It also serves as an international language throughout the various lands of Islam, where it is studied more or less widely, chiefly from religious motives. The peoples of the various Arabic countries, however, make use of different dialects of Arabic in their everyday conversation. Whether any of these dialects will succeed in developing an independent literature of its own, seems highly improbable. Attempts have been made on behalf of Egyptian Arabic for more than a century; but they have been of a sporadic nature. A few enthusiasts have produced books in the Egyptian dialect; but they have been frowned upon by the learned, and have received little encouragement from those for whom they were intended. Certain European Orientalists have also sought to persuade the Arabs to develop these dialects into literary languages in place of the classical Arabic. These suggestions have not been received with

favour, since such a development is fraught with grave danger to the literary and cultural unity of the Arabic world. Speaking at the International Congress of Orientalists held at Athens in 1912, an Egyptian representative strongly disapproved of such a regional development, saying: "You Westerners try to facilitate your mutual relations with the aid of artificial auxiliary languages, such as Volapuk, Esperanto and Ido; and you ask us to throw away a magnificent and perfect instrument for the exchange of thought that is already serving 200 million individuals! We shall show that we are better advised."

ARABIC AS THE CORNER-STONE OF SEMITIC PHILOLOGY

The study of Arabic has also proved of immense value in Semitic philology. In all probability, Arabia was the original home of the Semites, and it was from that land that the various Semitic peoples migrated in different periods of history to settle in Babylonia, Syria, Palestine, Egypt and Ethiopia.[1] According to this theory,

1. For an elaborate statement of this view, see Leone Caetani, *Annali dell' Islam*, vol. ii, part 2 (Milano, 1907); and his *Studi di Storia Orientale*, vol. i, (Milano, 1911).

which has found wide acceptance among competent scholars, Arabia is also regarded as the centre of distribution of the Semitic languages, and Arabic is, therefore, generally allowed to be nearer akin than any of its sister languages to the original archtype, the *Ursemitisch*, from which they are all derived. Although Arabic may not actually represent the proto-Semitic, for it has evidently passed through certain changes ; it has nevertheless been free from the more violent changes, which have taken place, for example, in Assyrian and Hebrew as a result of the clash of different nations and cultures. The comparatively isolated position of Arabia has saved its language from contamination by non-Semitic languages ; while the absence of any large number of aliens has also tended to preserve it from a too rapid change or any extensive corruption. In view of these facts, Arabic is justly regarded as the cornerstone of Semitic philology.

Moreover, the vocabulary of Arabic is much more copious than that of any other cognate language; and thanks to the diligence of the Arabic philologists of the early centuries of Islam, it has been preserved and illustrated in its

usage with a thoroughness which has been applied to few other languages of the world. In modern times, therefore, there has been a constant recourse to Arabic for the explanation of rare words and expressions in other Semitic languages. Most of the Semitic peoples have vanished, leaving only meagre records of their languages and literatures, so that we can never hope to become intimately acquainted with them. But, in the case of the Arabs, we possess ample materials for studying the vast vocabulary and grammatical structure of their language and the various stages of its development. A comparative study of the grammars of the various Semitic languages is, therefore, necessarily based on that of Arabic, which occupies a sort of key-position in relation to other cognate languages and thus constitutes the logical starting point of Semitic philology.

VALUE OF ARABIC FOR BIBLICAL STUDIES

The knowledge of Arabic language and Arabian life has proved of great value in Biblical studies also. "Since the beginning of the nineteenth century there has been constant recourse to Arabic for the explanation of rare words and

forms in Hebrew ; for Arabic, though more than a thousand years the junior as a literary language, is the senior philologically by countless centuries. Perplexing phenomena in Hebrew can often be explained as solitary and archaic survivals of forms which are frequent and common in the cognate Arabic. Words and idioms whose precise sense had been lost in Jewish tradition, receive a ready and convincing explanation from the same source. Indeed, no serious student of the Old Testament can afford to dispense with a first-hand knowledge of Arabic. The pages of any critical commentary on the Old Testament will illustrate the debt that Biblical exegesis owes to Arabic."[1]

"One who, after acquiring the language of the Old Testament, approaches the study of Arabic without any preconceived idea about their relative antiquity seems to find himself in possession of the key to every lock. He knows Hebrew roots which appear to have widely different senses ; he finds in Arabic that these roots at times represent groups of different letters which in

1. Alfred Guillaume in his Preface to *The Legacy of Islām* (Oxford, 1931), p. ix.

Hebrew have been amalgamated. Thus to dig and to be ashamed seem ideas that are utterly disconnected ; in Hebrew they are represented by the same group of consonants ; the Arabic shows that this is due to the confusion between two consonants, one of which had perhaps become unpronounceable in the later language. The conjugation of Hebrew verbs presents many an anomaly ; the Arabic tables often show how these anomalies have arisen. At times where a Hebrew word has a highly abstract meaning, its Arabic analogue refers to something more concrete. This is the case with the highest of all abstractions, the verb to be. The Arabic shows that it properly means to fall, and comes to express the ultimate abstraction of existence in a manner analogous to our words befall, accident, or case. In general, when the student compares the sense of the Hebrew verbs with that of the corresponding Arabic, he finds that the latter take him a stage further back ; show, if we may so say, edges which in the Hebrew usage have been polished off. Of many a word which is isolated in Hebrew the Arabic language exhibits a large kindred ; such relics are like branches removed from the

parent stock ; in Arabia it still thrives."[1]

The Dutch Orientalist, Albert Schultens (1686-1750), had already recognized in the 18th century the value and necessity of Arabic language and Arabian mode of thought in the interpretation of the Old Testament. In his dissertation on the Use of Arabic in the Interpretation of Scripture (1706) he explained those principles of Biblical exegesis, which he himself, later on, so successfully and strikingly applied in his *Liber Jobi.*[2]

The Hebrews were after all an off-shoot of the Semitic stock, the cousins of the Arabs, who had migrated from the northern deserts of Arabia into Palestine about 1400-1200 B.C. ; and had kept up their pastoral mode of life and outlook for a considerable period of time. It is, therefore, only natural to expect that all that is true of Arabian life, character and thought is eminently fitted to illustrate Hebrew life and mental outlook, especially in its primitive conditions. The

1. D.S. Margoliouth in his *Relations between Arabs and Israelites prior to the Rise of Islam*, p. 5 (London, 1924).

2. See *The Encyclopædia Britannica* (11th edition), *sub voce* Schultens.

influence of Arabist scholars in the interpretation of the Bible has, therefore, been most remarkable; and the work of Edward Pococke and W. Robertson Smith (d. 1894) in England and of Julius Wellhausen (d. 1918) in Germany, who have illuminated the Scriptures from the Arabian point of view, is consequently invested with an abiding interest and value.

In more recent times, the influence of Arabia on Israel has been studied also by Professor J.A. Montgomery (d. 1949) in his excellent treatise, *Arabia and the Bible* (University of Pennsylvania Press, Philadelphia, 1934). According to his investigations, the desert experiences of the tribes became part of their intense religious consciousness and contact with the desert was an important element in their life. He has, therefore, come to the conclusion that the key to the character of the religion of Israel is not to be found in the cultures of Egypt and Babylon, but in the desert territory to the south and east of Palestine. After discussing the relations of Arabian and Palestinian culture, the author further points out that, while ancient Egypt and Babylon have disappeared, Arabia is still a

living factor in current history.

ARABIC LANGUAGE AND THE JEWS

The Arabic language has not only proved of great value in the interpretation of the scriptures of the Hebrews, but the Hebrews or rather the Jews, as they came to be called in later times, had a great deal to do with the Arabic language during the Middle Ages.

The precise period of the first settlement of Jews in Arabia is not known ; and it is therefore impossible to say when the Arabic language was first employed by them. The historical data, concerning the Jews of Arabia, do not reach farther back than the first century of the Christian era ; but, judging by the important position they occupied in some parts of Arabia, it may be safely concluded that they must have been settled in the country for a considerable time past. Among the pre-Islamic poets there were a number of Jews ; and a certain Sarah, a Jewess, is reported to have composed some Arabic verses, in which she poured forth her natural grief at the tragic fate of her tribe, Quraiẓa.[1] A Jewish chief, named

1. Th. Nōldeke, *Beiträge zur Kenntniss der Poesie der alten Araber*, p. 54.

al-Samau'al, made himself famous by his loyalty as well as his poetry, so that the Arabs to this day use the phrase, "as loyal as al-Samau'al," to express unswerving fidelity.

When the Arabs established their dominion over a large part of the civilized world in the seventh century of the Christian era, and the Jews, along with other subject races, gradually came under the influence of Arabic culture, they readily adopted the language of the conquerors, and from Baghdad in the east to Morocco and Spain in the west, they spoke and wrote Arabic in all its various forms.[1] In the course of time, Arabic became a second mother-tongue with the Jews of the Arabic-Islamic world, so that rabbis and scholars, who desired to be understood by the masses of their community, were compelled to write in Arabic. In Toledo, for instance, where the Jews had been thoroughly assimilated by the general population in language and customs, the minutes of the religious congregation were kept in Arabic. The Jews not only translated their religious and theological books into Arabic, but

1. In the Islamic states, Jewish communities often prospered, and even furnished their Muslim masters with statesmen of distinction, especially in Egypt, Spain and Mesopotamia.

they also wrote in it upon all conceivable subjects.[1] Saadia, Judah ha-Lévi, Maimonides, Ibn Ezra and many other eminent Jewish scholars of the Middle Ages wrote in pure Arabic. A very considerable part of the Jewish literature of the Middle Ages is in the Arabic language; and anyone who desires to have a first-hand knowledge of the literary production of the Hebrew genius during those ages, must have recourse to Arabic. A fairly good idea of the many beautiful literary relics, which Jewish authors have left in Arabic, may be had from the excellent writings of Moritz Steinschneider.[2]

The adoption of the Arabic language by the Jews, living in Muslim countries, had a distinctly salutary effect upon the Hebrew tongue. The Arabs attached great importance to the correct use of their language; and thus the Jews, who naturally entertained a deep love for the language of their scriptures, were induced to turn their attention to the deplorable state into which their

1. For further details, see Neubauer's article, 'Non-Hebrew Languages used by Jews,' in the *Jewish Quarterly Review*, vol. iv. p. 9 *et seq*.

2. Moritz Steinschneider, *Die Arabische Litteratur der Juden* (Frankfurt am Main, 1902). See also his 'Introduction to the Arabic Literature of the Jews,' in the *Jewish Quarterly Review*, vols. ix-xiii.

sacred language had fallen. They set about polishing it, subjected it to a careful grammatical analysis, and then created a grammar for it, which was modelled after that of the Arabic. For instance, the grammar of Rabbi David Qimḥi (died about 1235 A.C.), which exercised a profound influence on the subsequent study of Hebrew among Christians, borrows a great deal from Arabic sources.

Moreover, Hebrew poetry which in the seventh century resembled nothing so much as a lyre with broken strings--it was without rhyme or metre—came under the influence of the study of Arabic poetry and began to assume elegant rhythmic forms, and soon rivalled the latter in sonorousness and polish.[1] In the words of Professor MacDonald, "the Hebrews remained Arabs. ... Their literature, throughout all their history and to this day, in its method of production and its recorded forms, is of Arab scheme and type ... When the literature of the Hebrews is to be considered as to the literary types which it contains, the key is to be found in the far wider Arabic

1. I. Broyde in *The Jewish Encyclopædia*, vol. ii, p. 50. (New York, 1901.)

literature."[1] The Jewish writers, for instance, produced their own maqāmāt-literature after Arabic models.

"During the Middle Ages, Islamic Kalām provided the pattern, on which Jewish discussion formed itself. The outstanding representative of Jewish Kalām was Saadya (882-942 A.D.), who was born and educated in Egypt and acted as Gaon of the Rabbanic Academy of Sura (Babylonia). His "Book of Doctrines and Beliefs" reflects, in the arrangement and treatment of its topics, the influence of the Mu'tazila." (Dr. R. Walzer in the *History of Philosophy*, edited by Radhakrishanan, vol. ii, London, 1953.)

ARABIC STUDIES AMONG JEWISH ORIENTALISTS

The Jewish literature of the Middle Ages developed under the direct influence of the superior and more progressive Arabic literature, while Muslim theology and philosophy exercised a deep influence upon Jewish thought. As a consequence, a close relationship came to subsist between the Jewish and Arabo-Islamic literatures; and the Jewish scholars who were engaged

1. D. B. MacDonald, *The Hebrew Literary Genius*, p. xxvi (Princeton, 1933).

in the study of their own literature were easily and naturally led to the study of Arabic literature, which had furnished inspiring models in many branches of secular and religious learning. This will explain the comparatively large number of Jewish scholars among the European Orientalists, and the important role which they have played in the prosecution of Arabic and Islamic studies. James Darmesteter, Hartwig Derenbourg, Eduard Glaser, Ignaz Goldziher, Joseph Halévy, Hartwig Hirschfeld, Josef Horovitz, Gottlieb Leitner, Salomon Munk, D. H. Müller, Moritz Steinschneider, Gustav Weil, E. Lévi-Provençal and Eugen Mittwoch were all Jews. Among the prominent living Jewish Arabists, we may mention G. Levi della Vida, Joseph Schacht, E. I. J. Rosenthal, Reuben Levy, Bernard Lewis, W. J. Fischel, Martin Plessner, S.D.F. Goitein, S. Pines and Gustave E. von Grunebaum, besides Fräulein Dr. Ilse Lichtenstädter, a lady from Hamburg and a former pupil of Dr. J. Horovitz, who has already made her mark as an Arabist.[1] It may

1. The chief works which Dr. Lichtenstädter has so far published are: *Das Nasib der altarabischen Qaside*, published in *Islamica* (Leipzig), vol. v.; *Women in the Aiyām al-'Arab*, a study of Female Life during Warfare in pre-Islamic Arabia (The Royal Asiatic Society Prize Publication Fund, London, 1935); *Islam and the Modern Age*,

be further added that several eminent Orientalists, such as Chwolson (1819-1911), Sachau (1845-1930) and Reckendorf, who professed Christianity, were converts from the Jewish faith. The late Prof. D. S. Margoliouth, (1858-1940) though himself a Christian, had a Jewish ancestry.[1]

ARABIC LANGUAGE IN RELATION TO CHRISTIANITY AND THE CHRISTIANS

In view of the life-long connection of Islam with Arabic, which is the language of the Qur'ān, the sacred book of the Muslims, it may seem paradoxical—and yet it remains a historical fact—that the associations of this language with

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an Analysis and an Appraisal. (New York, 1958); an edition of Muhammad ibn Ḥabīb's *Kitāb al-Muḥabbar*; besides a large number of valuable articles, too numerous to mention here, which have appeared in *The Encyclopædia of Islam* and in several learned journals of Europe, America and India.

1. The name Margoliouth, which occurs also as Margaliot, Marsgolis, Margulies and in various other forms, was originally borne by a Polish family of Talmudic scholars, who traced their descent from Rashi on the one side, and from the families of Shor and Samuel Edels on the other. The first Margoliouth to gain prominence was Samuel, who was *dayyan* at Posen about 1550. One of his sons, Mose-Mordecai, was rabbi at Cracow. There are numerous scholars bearing the name of Margoliouth, whose relationship to this family, though probable, cannot be determined with accuracy. See *The Jewish Encyclopædia* (N. York and London), vol. viii, p. 327, *sub voce*; and Vallentine's *Jewish Encyclopædia* (1938), p. 408.

Christianity are older in point of time than with Islam; for Christianity had penetrated the Arabian Peninsula long before the rise of Islam, and the name of Jesus Christ was hallowed by the Arabs, before they learnt to revere that of Muḥammad; *cf.* the sermons of Quss b. Sā'idah, the Christian Bishop of Najran, which are still partly preserved in Arabic literature, as specimens of rare eloquence. Similarly, the Christian Arab poets gave expression to Christian ideas and sentiments in the Arabic tongue, before it became the primary and chief medium of Islamic doctrine and the principal vehicle of Islamic culture.[1]

The rise of Islam, it is true, put a stop to the spread of Christianity in the Peninsula, but it did not terminate the connection of the Christians with the Arabic language. The historical events of the following centuries rather spread the use of Arabic among the Christians of the Near East; and ever since the early Arab con-

1. See in this connection the studies of Père Louis Cheikho, *La Christianisme et la littérature chrétienne en Arabie avant l'Islam* (3 parts, Bayrout, 1912-23), and *Les Poètes Arabes Chrétiens avant l'Islam* (6 fasc., Bayrout, 1890-1926), and also Anton Baumstark: *Das Problem eines vorislamischen christlich-kirchlichen Schrifttums in arabischer Sprache* in *Islamica*, IV Band (Leipzig, 1931), pp. 562- 75.

quests in Western Asia, when Syriac and other Aramaic dialects gave place to their kindred Arabic idiom, the Oriental Christian communities of the Near East have used Arabic as their everyday language, and during the last thousand years or so have produced in it a voluminous literature, both ecclesiastical and secular.[1]

In the 10th century, the Melkite patriarch of Alexandria, Eutychius, known in Arabic as Sa'īd ibn al-Bitrīq, wrote a history of the Christian Churches in Arabic under the title of *Naẓm al-Jawhar* (ed. Pococke at Oxford, 1658-59), as did also the Jacobite bishop, Severus ibn al-Muqaffa'. At the beginning of the 11th century, Elias bar Shinnaya, the learned metropolitan of Nisibis, wrote his books intended for his co-religionists either entirely in Arabic or in Arabic and Syriac, arranged in parallel columns. The Gospels were also translated by Christian scholars

1. For a general survey of Christian-Arabic literature, see C. Brockelmann, *Die syrische und christlich-arabische Litteratur* (2nd ed., Leipzig, 1909); and A Baumstark, *Das christlich-arabische Schrifttum*, which forms a part of *Die christlichen Litteraturen des Orients* (Sammlung Göschen, Leipzig, 1911). Père Louis Cheikho enumerates 900 Christian authors, whose Arabic works have been preserved in manuscript in the different libraries of the world, in his *Les Manuscrits des auteurs arabes chrétiens depuis l'Islam* (Bayrout, 1924).

into Arabic at a fairy early date, as is shown by the great antiquity of the manuscripts preserved in the Vatican. An important branch of the Christian-Arabic literature is formed by the Arabic writings of Christian apologists and polemicists, *e.g.*, Ḥunain bin Isḥāq, Abū 'Alī 'Isā bin Zurā'a, Yaḥyā bin 'Adī, Ibn 'Uṯẖāl, Dānīāl bin al-Ḵẖaṭṭāb and others.[1] Some of their works, which possess a deep interest for students of religious history, have been published by Pére Paul Sbath in his *Vingt traités philosophiques et apologetiques d'auteurs arabes chrétiens du* IX*e au* XIV*e siècle* (Cairo, 1929); while several Arabic works by Christian writers dealing with patriarchal and secular history (annals, chronicles, etc.) are comprised in the *Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium*, Series III: *Scriptores Arabici*, which has been in course of publication since 1903, under the editorship of Chabot, Guidi, Hyvernat and Carra de Vaux. As the considerations of space forbid me to mention other branches of Christian-Arabic litrature, I must rest content with referring the interested reader

1. For further details see M. Steinschneider, *Polemische und apologetische Litteratur in arabischer Sprache zwischen Muslimen, Christen und Juden* (Leipzig, 1877).

to the excellent work of Georg Graf, who has given us a valuable historical survey of the subject in his *Geschichte der christlichen arabischen Litteratur*, 5 vols., Rome, 1944-53; while H. Groussen too has made important contributions to the same subject in his *Beiträge zur christlich-arabische Litteratur-geschichte* (Leipzig, 1909).

Turning to the far West, we find that in Moorish Spain, too, the Christian subjects had fallen under the spell of Arabic language and literature. Many of them were so deeply imbued with Arabic culture that we find a contemporary writer, Alvaro, Bishop of Cordova, bitterly deploring this state of affairs. "My fellow-Christians," he says, "delight in the poems and romances of the Arabs; they study the works of Mohammaden theologians and philosophers, not in order to refute them, but to acquire a correct and elegant Arabic style. Where to-day can a layman be found who reads the Latin commentaries on Holy Scriptures? Who is there that studies the Gospels, the Prophets, the Apostles? Alas! the young Christians who are most conspicuous for their talents have no knowledge of any literature or language save the Arabic; they read and study

with avidity Arabic books; they amass whole libraries of them at a vast cost, and they everywhere sing the praises of Arabian lore. On the other hand, at the mention of Christian books they disdainfully protest that such works are unworthy of their notice. The pity of it! Christians have forgotten their own tongue, and scarce one in a thousand can be found able to compose in fair Latin a letter to a friend. But when it comes to writing Arabic, how many there are who can express themselves in that language with the greatest elegance, and even compose verses which surpass in formal correctness those of the Arabs themselves!"[1]

At the present time, Arabic is used as a literary and spoken language not only by the Muslim Arabs but also by the Christians, resident in Arabic-speaking countries. Almost all Christians in the Near East read their Bible in Arabic, which language they also use in their liturgies. This fact should not, however, cause us any surprise; for Jesus Christ himself spoke a form of Aramaic, which was closely akin to Arabic.

1. Reinhart Dozy, *Histoire des Musulmans d'Espagne*, vol. ii, p. 103; English translation by F.G. Stokes, entitled *Spanish Islam*, p. 268 (London, 1913).

Compare the words and expressions attributed to Jesus Christ in the Gospel according to St. Mark: chap. 5, v. 41; chap. 7, v. 34; and chap. 15, v. 34:

١ - اخذ بيد الصبيّة و قال لها : طَلِيثَا قُومِي الذى تفسيره، يا صبيّة لكِ اَقُولُ قُومِي -

٢ - ثمّ نظر الى السماء متنهّدا و قال له اِتْفَتِحْ اى انْفَتِحْ -

٣ - صَرَخَ يسوعُ بصوتٍ عظيمٍ قائلًا اَلُوهِي اَلُوهِي لَمَّا شَبَقْتَنِي الذى تفسيره، الٰهى الٰهى لِماذا تَرَكْتَنِى (انجيل يسوع المسيح للقديس مرقس) +

It will thus be seen that the march of historical events has made Arabic an inter-national and inter-communal language, which transcends religious, racial and geographical barriers.

In modern times, the Christians of Syria and Lebanon have played an important role in the revival of Arabic language and literature. Since a whole volume would be required for an adequate account of their activities, I shall rest content

with mentioning only a few prominent literary figures in this connection.

In Syria, the Maronite archbishop of Aleppo, Germanus Farhāt (d. 1732) did much to revive the study of Arabic grammar, lexicography and rhetoric amongst his countrymen by writing a number of books on these subjects. An Arabic *Dīwān* or collection of his poetry, published at Bayrout in 1866, also stands to his credit. Michael Casiri (1710-1791) is another noteworthy Syrian Maronite scholar, who originally came from the town of Ghazīr. He compiled for the first time a descriptive catalogue of the 1800 Arabic manuscripts preserved at the Escorial in Spain under the title: *Bibliotheca Arabico-Hispana Escurialensis* (2 vols., Madrid, 1760, 1770).

Ahmad Fāris al-Shidyāq (1804-1884), who was born of Maronite parents in Bayrout and was later converted to Islam, was not only active in the field of Arabic journalism throughout his life, but he also found time for serious philological studies. Besides an Arabic primer and an Arabic grammar, he published his studies in Arabic etymology in his *Sirr al-Layāl fi'l-Qalb wa'l-Ibdāl* (Stambul, 1284) and made critical contributions

to Arabic lexicography in *al-Jāsūs 'ala'l-Qāmūs* (Stambul, 1299 A.H.).

Buṭrus Bustānī (1819-1883) was another notable Maronite scholar, who compiled a comprehensive Arabic dictionary, *Muḥīṭ al-Muḥīṭ* (2 vols., Bayrout, 1870), which pays particular attention to the expressions and meanings peculiar to the various Syrian dialects. It was followed by an abridgement, *Quṭr al-Muḥīṭ*. His chief title to fame rests upon the *Dā'irat al-Ma'ārif*, an Arabic Encyclopædia, which began to appear in 1876, and of which he was able to publish six volumes before his death. This useful work of reference was completed in 1900 in eleven volumes through the devoted labours of his son, Salīm and his grandsons, Najīb and Naẓīf. The Buṭrus family has, thus, played an important part in the Arabic literary renaissance of the nineteenth century.

The Jesuit Fathers, associated with the Catholic University of St. Joseph at Bayrout, have also rendered valuable services to the cause of Arabic philology and literature. Besides founding a weekly review 'al-Bashīr' in 1869, and a bi-monthly literary and scientific review

'al-Mashriq' in 1898, they have published from the Catholic Press a large number of works of Arabic philologists, litterateurs and poets.

Another Christian Arab author, who deserves to be mentioned in this place is the historian and man of letters, Jirjī Zaydān (1861-1914). He was born in Bayrout, but lived and worked for most part of his active and fruitful life in Egypt. Besides smaller works on Arabic philology, he wrote a History of Islamic Civilization (*Tā'rīkh al-Tamaddun al-Islāmī*, 5 vols., Cairo, 1902-1906) and also a History of Arabic Literature (*Tā'rīkh Ādāb al-Lughat al-'Arabiyya*, 4 vols., Cairo, 1911-1914). By means of these works, which were mainly modelled on European prototypes (chiefly Alfred von Kremer and Carl Brockelmann), he was one of the first Eastern scholars to bring the fruits of the researches of European Orientalists, supplemented by his own reading, within the reach of the general Arab public. His works gave a powerful stimulus to the growth of historical and literary studies along modern lines in Egypt. His influence was, however, not confined to Egypt alone, for his works were widely circulated and were translated into several

eastern and western languages. He also founded in 1892 a literary monthly *al-Hilāl*, which has been devoted to the dissemination of modern ideas among the Arab intelligentsia. It is still one of the leading Arab periodicals.

I should not fail to mention in the present context another Christian scholar from Lebanon, Professor Philip Khouri Hitti (b. 1886), who has been most active in promoting and advocating the cause of Arabic studies in the United States of America. As a professor and author, he has done a great deal to promote and popularise the study of Arabic language, literature and history in the New World. Besides his numerous contributions to several encyclopaedias and professional journals, he has written a number of authoritative books on the Near East. His excellent works—especially his *History of the Arabs*, a marvel of judicious selection and scholarly condensation—are read all over the world by grateful students as well as the general public. The services of Professor Hitti in his chosen field of study are above praise; and since they are so well known, they need no further comment from me, except that *inna Allāh lā yuḍī'u ajr al-Muḥ-*

sinīn ![1]

The Christians form the majority of the Syro-Lebanese emigrants, who have settled in the North and South America. They have carried the love of their native language and literature to the new lands of their adoption, where they publish many Arabic periodicals of an attractive and interesting character.[2] They have also produced a number of poets and literary men, the best known of them being Jabrān Khalīl Jabrān (1883-1931), whose influence has been felt throuhout the Arab world. Some of the most tender and oft quoted Arabic verses have been composed by Arab poets in New York and Sao Paulo.[3]

GREEK AUTHORS IN ARABIC TRANSLATIONS

During the Golden Age of Islam, the enlightened Caliphs of Baghdad and their nobles caused the works of a host of Greek authors to be translated into Arabic. In this way, a large

1. Al-Qur'ān, ix. 120.

2. See the art. 'Djarīda' in the *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, New edition, vol. ii, *sub voce*.

3. See Brockelmann, *Geschichte der arabischen Litteratur. Supplementband* III, 3. Kapitel : Die Syrer in America ; also P.K. Hitti's article on '*Djāliya*' in the *Enc. of Islam*, New ed., vol. ii, p. 403.

number of Greek works on philosophy, medicine, mathematics, astronomy, mechanics, music, geography and history made their appearance in the Arabic language. Now, these translations, some of which have been fortunately preserved, have been instrumental in restoring some of the lost glories of the ancient Greek world; since there is a number of Greek authors, whose works have been lost in their original form, but have been preserved in Arabic. This is a service for which we cannot be too grateful to the Arabs. The works of this character that have so far been discovered and have come to the knowledge of the present writer, are:

1. Three sections of the *Conics* (*Kitāb al-Makhrūṭāt*) of Apollonius of Perga. We learn from the *Fihrist* of Ibn al-Nadīm (Cairo edition, p. 373) that it was already rare when translated into Arabic, and that the 8th section had in large part been lost.

2. The *Spherics* (*Kitāb al-Ashkāl al-Kuriyyah*) of Menelaus of Alexandria.[1]

1. *Cf.* M. Krause, *Die Sphärik von Menelaos aus Alexandrien in der Verbesserung von Abu Nasr Manṣur bin Ali bin Iraq*. Berlin, 1936.

3. The *Mechanics* (*Kitāb al-'Ālāt*) of Hero of Alexandria.

4. The *Pneumatics* (*Kitāb al-Hawā'*) of Philo of Byzantium.

5. A treatise of Euclid on the balance (*Mīzān*), which was edited and published by Wöpcke in the *Journal Asiatique* (1851), p. 27.

6. A book on *Clepsydra* (*Sā'āt al-Mā'*), attributed to Archimedes.[1]

7. The *Geoponique* (*Kitāb Falāḥat al-Arḍ*) of Anatolius of Berytos.[2]

8. A number of the medical writings of Galen, *e.g.*, (*a*) Franz Pfaff, *Die nur arabisch erhaltenen Teile der Epidemienkommentare des Galen und die Überlieferung des Corpus Hippocraticum* (Sitzungsberichte der Preussiche Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1931, pp. 558-81), (*b*) *Galen on Medical Experience*, text of the Arabic version with an English translation and Notes by R. Walzer (Oxford U. Press, 1944).[3]

1. *Cf.* Baron Carra de Vaux in *The Legacy of Islam*, p. 376 (Oxford, 1931).

2. P. Sbath, *L'ouvrage Geoponique d'Anatolius de Berytos*, in *Bulletin de l'Institut d'Egypte*, XIII (1930-31), pp. 47-54.

3. See also H. Ritter and R. Walzer, *Arabische Übersetzungen griechischer Ærzte in Stambuler Bibliotheken* (Sitzungsberichte d. *Preuss*, Ak. d. Wissen., 1934, p. 801 *et seq.*)

9. *Optica* (*Kitāb al-Manāẓir wa'l-Marāyā*) attributed to Ptolemy.

10. *Oekonomikos* of Bryson, studied by M Plessner.

11. A treatise on morals by Themistius, probably preserved in al-Kindi's *Risāla fi'l-ḥīla li-daf' il-Aḥzān.*[1]

As was pointed out by the English Arabist Simon Ockley (d. 1720) long ago, the Arabic translations of Greek authors can also afford invaluable help to the classical scholars in the critical study of extant Greek texts, for these translations date from a period earlier than that of the oldest existing Greek manuscripts, and reference to them is bound to prove helpful in fixing the original Greek texts.[2]

1. H. Ritter und R. Walzer, *Uno scritto morale inedito di al-Kindi* (Temistio ?) Rendiconti d. R. Accad. Nazionale dei Lincei (1938), VIII, p. 62.

2. It is a highly interesting phenomenon in the history of human culture how works belonging to one literature are sometimes lost in their original language, but are preserved in another. Corresponding to the instances cited above, there are a number of Arabic works which are now preserved in Latin translations only. Not much of Kindī's work, for instance, has survived in its original form, but a good deal is still extant in Latin translations made by Gerard of Cremona and others. His *Optica*, preserved in a Latin translation,

The History of Philosophers (Tārīkh al-Ḥukamā') by Ibn al-Qifṭī (died in Damascus in 1248 A.D.), which contains 414 biographies of Greek, Syrian and Muslim physicians, astronomers and philosophers, is a mine of information for the knowledge of Greek literature possessed by the Arabs and tells us much about Greek antiquity which has not survived in classical sources. Similarly, an earlier writer, Muḥammad bin Isḥāq al-Nadīm of Baghdad (d. 995 A.D.) gives, in the seventh section of his 'Bibliography' (*al-Fihrist*), a useful account of the Greek philosophers from Thales to Plutarch, with the names of their works that were known to the Muslims, chiefly through translations.

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influenced Roger Bacon and other Western savants. So is the case with the writings ascribed to Jābir b. Ḥayyān. Similarly, al-Khwārizmī's work on the Indian method of calculation was translated into Latin by Abelard of Bath in the 12th century, and has survived as *De Numero Indico*, whereas the Arabic original is lost. Latin has also preserved more than one of Ibn Rushd's works, the Arabic originals of which were destroyed by the blind zeal of fanatical theologians. India provides a parallel case. There are a number of religious books relating to Buddhism, which are lost in the original Pali, but are still preserved in Chinese and Tibetan translations, which were made at the time when Buddhism was introduced from India into China and Tibet.

IMPORTANCE OF THE ARABIC LANGUAGE FOR UNIVERSAL HISTORY

The Arabic language is also very important for purposes of Universal History. The subject of history, as is well known, furnishes one of the most copious departments of Arabic literature. It was, in fact, the last branch of that literature to wither away for want of proper cultivation. The Arabs have always had a great penchant for historical narrative; and the vast extent of the literature they produced in this field may be gauged from the fact that when the indefatigable Wüstenfeld (1808-1899) made a survey of the Arabic historians, who had flourished during the first thousand years of Islam, in his well-known work *Die Geschichtsschreiber der Araber und ihre Werke* (Göttingen, 1882), the total number of the authors noted by him came up to 590. Many of these historians are credited with numerous works, each of a colossal magnitude. The importance of Arabic historical literature does not, however, lie merely in its vast bulk. What must be realized in this connection is the fact that the history of the Arabs is not the history of an ordinary people. In the Middle Ages, they were

the ruling nation of the world and the pioneers of progress, who inherited and carried on the traditions of ancient cultures (Greek, Persian and Indian), and ultimately transmitted them, with rich additions of their own, to Mediæval Europe, and thus paved the way for modern civilization. No universal history can, therefore, be said to be complete, which does not do proper justice to the important role they have played as the leading nation of the world and the vanguard of civilization for several centuries. And here comes in the importance of the Arabic language; for the chief literary sources for the political and cultural history of the Arabs are in this language, the knowledge of which is consequently indispensable for a thorough and first-hand study of the subject.

Moreover, the Arabic writers have not only preserved a full record of their own history, as few other nations have done, but their chronicles also shed valuable light on the life of the neighbouring peoples, who came in contact with them. We may cite, as an instance, al-Bīrūnī's *Tārīkh al-Hind*, which gives an authoritative account of the religion, philosophy, literature, chronology, astronomy, legal and social institutions, manners

and customs of India as they existed about the year 1030 A.C. What patient research in Arabic sources can reveal is again well illustrated by J.T. Reinaud's admirable *Mémoire sur l'Inde* (Paris, 1849). Similarly several Russian Orientalists have gleaned from Arabic literary sources (*e.g.*, Ibn Faḍlān) valuable information, concerning the peoples and races who lived on the northern borders of the Arab Empire.

The above considerations will, I hope, enable us to appreciate the remark of the famous German historian, Leopold von Ranke, who has observed that, leaving aside Latin, Arabic is the most important of all the languages of the world for purposes of universal history. The remarks of the late Professor Robert Flint, in his *Philosophy of History*, are also pertinent to the subject in hand. He writes, "It must not be forgotten that during the Middle Ages there existed a Mohammedan as well as a Christian civilisation and a Mohammedan as well as a Christian historiography . . . The Christian mediæval world was only a part of the mediæval world, and a part imperfectly intelligible without acquaintance with its Mohammedan counterpart and comple-

ment. It may be safely affirmed that all our universal histories, histories of civilisation, and philosophies of history, suffer from their authors' defective knowledge of the history of Mohammedanism. Probably, no class of scholars have it in their power to increase more the stock of generally useful historical knowledge than those who are qualified to appreciate and utilise the Arabic historians. The histories of Mohammedan countries in the Middle Ages have been as fully recorded by Mohammedan annalists as those of various regions of Christendom during the same period; and, consequently, a knowledge of the former as exact and ample as of the latter is recoverable, and may equally be made to enter into the common inheritance of educated mankind."[1]

THE IMPORTANCE OF ARABIC FOR THE HISTORY OF SCIENCE

The Arabic language is, likewise, important for the history of science. The history of the origin, development and progress of science in

1. Robert Flint, *History of the Philosophy of History*, pp. 78-79 (Edinburgh and London, 1893).

general and of its various branches has in recent times become a very important branch of study, in which abundant and highly instructive results have been achieved. But, unfortunately, most of the histories of science written by western writers of to-day are vitiated by the fact that they do not pay adequate attention to the contributions made by the Arabs to various sciences. This is partly due to their ignorance and partly to their indifference. It is also due to the circumstance that the scientific literature in Arabic has not been fully studied, though a good beginning has been made in several directions.

Now, it is a well-ascertained historical fact that the Arabs proved themselves very apt pupils of the Greeks and other ancient civilized peoples. They not only preserved the medical, natural and mathematical sciences as handed down by the ancients, but also cultivated them further and on many points developed them to a very considerable extent.[1] They kept alive the study of sciences

1. For a concise and authoritative statement of the scientific achievements of the Arabs, see Carra de Vaux, *Les Penseurs de l' Islam*, vols. i and ii (Paris, 1921-22) and *The Legacy of Islam*, edited by Sir Thomas Arnold and Prof. Alfred Guillaume(Oxford, 1931). The student may also consult with much profit to himself the Italian

as a part of the higher intellectual life, in an age when the Christian West was desperately fighting against barbarism. "The zenith of their activity may be placed in the ninth and tenth centuries; but it was continued down to the fifteenth. From the twelfth century, everyone in the West who had any taste for science, some desire for light, turned to the East or to the Moorish West. At this period the works of the Arabs began to be translated, as those of the Greeks had previously been by them. The Arabs, thus form a bond of union, a connecting link between ancient culture and modern civilization. When at the Renaissance the spirit of man was once again filled with the zeal for knowledge and stimulated by the spark of genius, if it was able to set promptly to work, to produce and to invent, it was because the Arabs had preserved and perfected various branches of knowledge, kept the spirit of research alive and eager, and maintained

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savant, Aldo Mieli's *La Science Arabe et son rôle dans l'évolution scientifique mondiale* (Leyden, 1938), which, besides giving an authoritative summary of the whole subject, is exceedingly rich in bibliographical references. Edward J. Jurji, too, has traced "The Course of Arab Scientific Thought" in *The Arab Heritage* (Princeton, 1944), pp. 221-250.

it pliant and ready for future discoveries."[1] No history of science can, therefore, be regarded as complete which fails to take into account the scientific achievements of the Arabs.

But the Arab contributions to science cannot be properly and satisfactorily studied without a knowledge of Arabic, which holds the key to the vast scientific literature of the Muslims. Not only the Arabs but other peoples also, who were associated with them in building up the composite Islamic culture, wrote in Arabic for religious, philosophical and scientific purposes. Al-Fārābī (d. 339/950) and Ibn Sīnā (d. 428/1037) were Turks by origin, but their principal works on philosophy, medicine and music were written in Arabic. Similarly, Omar Khayyām (d. 526/1132) who is famous all over the world as a Persian poet, wrote his Algebra in Arabic.[2] As a consequence, Arabic which had already been the imperial language of the Muslim Empire, also became the

1. Baron Carra de Vaux in *The Legacy of Islam*, p. 377 (Oxford, 1931).

2. *Maqala fi'l-Jabr w'al-Muqabala*, published with a French translation by Woepeke under the title *L'Algebre d'Omar al-khayyami, publiée, traduite et accompagnee d'extraits de Mss inedits* (Paris, 1851).

language of science and culture and, in the course of time, the depository of all that the best brains in the Muslim world thought and wrote for centuries.

Johann Beckmann, who wrote a history of inventions, refers to the scientific achievements of the Arabs and to the importance of Arabic in this connection in the following words: "What a noble people were the Arabs! We are indebted to them for a great deal of knowledge and many inventions of great utility; and we should have still more to thank them for, were we fully aware of the benefits we have received from them. What a pity that their works should be suffered to moulder into dust, without being made available to us; what a shame that those conversant with their rich language should meet with so little encouragement. Had I still twenty years to live and could hope for an abundant supply of Arabic works, I would gladly learn Arabic."[1]

The desire of Johann Beckmann to learn Arabic for scientific purposes finds a striking

1. Johann Beckmann, *Beiträge zur Geschichte der Erfindungen*, 3 Bände, Leipzig, 1792. English translation in Bohn's Library, London, 1846.

parallel in the case of Dr. Samuel Johnson, the dominating literary figure of the eighteenth-century England. When he was granted a pension by the British government, he is reported to have exclaimed, "Had this happened twenty years ago, I should have gone to Constantinople to learn Arabic as Pococke did." The remarks of these two distinguished scholars clearly point to the high esteem in which Arabic was held in learned Europe as a depository of science and culture down to the eighteenth century.

It was not given to Beckmann to realize his ambition of learning Arabic as a linguistic equipment for the study of the scientific inventions and discoveries of the Arabs. A contemporary scholar, however, has been more fortunate in this respect—I mean Dr. George Sarton, the well-known editor of *Isis* and the author of *An Introduction to the History of Science*, which is a monument of patient industry and vast erudition.[1] This Belgian savant, who has since the last Great War resided at Harvard in the United States of America, in the course of his researches

1. Three volumes of this important and admirable work have already appeared (Baltimore, 1927, 1932, 1947).

into the history of the various sciences, became increasingly conscious of the fact that he could not do justice to the Mediæval period in particular, without possessing a first-hand knowledge of Arabic. He felt so strongly convinced of this that he went to Syria to improve his Arabic, stayed there for about a year; and on his return he wrote, as a kind of by-product, a paper on the study and teaching of Arabic, which contains many thoughtful observations and useful suggestions on the subject.[1] All the modern scholars who have devoted themselves to the historical and technical study of the scientific progress in Mediæval Islam, such as Emmanuel Sédillot, (d. 1832), Amélie Sédillot (d. 1875), Clément-Mullet (d. 1869), Lucien Leclerc (d. 1893), Heinrich Suter (d. 1922), Carl Schoy (d. 1925), Eilhard Wiedemann (d. 1928), Carlo Nallino (d. 1938), Julius Ruska, Paul Kraus (d. 1945), Max Meyerhof (d. 1945), John Holmyard, H. G. Farmer and R. Walzer, have possessed a good knowledge of the Arabic language.

1. George Sarton, *Remarks on the Study and Teaching of Arabic in the Macdonald Presentation Volume*, (Princeton, 1933), pp. 331-347.

FITNESS OF ARABIC FOR SCIENTIFIC PURPOSES

The question has, sometimes, been asked whether Arabic can meet the needs and demands of a progressive society in the present age of science and technology. Can it find suitable words and expressions for new ideas and objects. The characteristic genius of Arabic as well as its past history encourages us to answer this question in the affirmative. In the past, Arabic has met such needs either by borrowing words for new concepts and objects from foreign languages or by coining new words from its own 'roots'[1] Like other Semitic languages, the outstanding characteristic of Arabic is its root-system. Almost the whole Arabic vocabulary is ultimately based, and derived from, a number of triliteral roots, which in the majority of cases consist of consonants. For example, KTB is a root, while QTL is another. Each root has a

1. The loan-words in Arabic have been collected and treated in a number of special works, *e.g.*, Abu Manṣūr al-Jawalīqī (466-539 A.H.) : *al-Mu'arrab*, edited by E. Sachau (Leipzig 1867) ; al-Khafājī (d. 1069 A.H.) : *Shifā al-Ghalīl fī mā fī Kalām al-'Arab min al-Dakhīl* (Cairo, 1395 A.H.). Also see Arthur Jeffery : *The Foreign Vocabulary of the Qur'ān* (Baroda, 1938) and A. Siddiqi : *Studien über die Persischen Fremdwörter im klassischen Arabisch.* (Göttingen. 1919).

concept associated with it, and modifications of the meaning are expressed by internal vowel variations, *e.g.*, active verb *kataba* (he wrote) changes into the passive *kutiba* (it was written) and the singular noun *kitāb* (a book) into the plural *kutub* (books); while secondary modifications are effected partly by the same method and partly by affixes and inserted letters. Thus from the root QTL, which conveys the idea of killing, are formed the verb *qatala* (he killed) and the verbal noun *qatl* (killing), the adjectival nouns *qātil* (a killer, with *quttāl* as its plural), the intensive *qatūl* (a great killer); *qatīl* (one killed, plural *qatlā*) and *maqtal* (the place of killing) and a number of other derivatives. Thus every word whose root letters are QTL will be connected in some way or another with the idea of killing. This method of derivation applies both to nouns and verbs. These roots are about 4,500 in number. This will enable us to realize the large variety of ideas and concepts which can be expressed through Arabic, especially when we take into account not only the basic roots but also that enormous number of vocables, which can be derived from them.

In elaboration of the above remarks, I can-

not do better than quote Professor Browne, who says, "For a scientific language, indeed, Arabic is eminently fitted by its wealth of roots and by the number of derivative forms, each expressing some particular modification of the root-idea, of which each is susceptible. Let us illustrate this by two examples, the first drawn from the terminology of Medicine, the second formed after a perfectly sound analogy to express a quite modern idea. The primitive verb has in Arabic some dozen derived forms (commonly called 'conjugations'), each expressing some definite modification (causative, intensive, reciprocal, middle, etc.) of the meaning connoted by the original verb. Of these ten conjugations, the tenth is commonly desiderative, and if we substitute the numbers 1, 2, 3 for the first, second and third letters of the triliteral root the general form of its verbal noun will be (*Isti.* 1. 2. a. 3) and of its active participle (*Musta,* 1. 2. i. 3). Thus from the simple verb *ghafara,* "he pardoned", we have in the tenth conjugation *istighfār,* "asking for pardon," and *mustaghfir,* "one who asks for pardon"; from *kamala,* "he was perfect," *istikmāl,* "seeking perfection," and *mustakmil* "one who seeks perfection"; and so on. Now the old theory (adopted by the Arabian

physicians) as to the aetiology of dropsy was that it was caused by excessive drinking, and hence it was named by the Arabs (and consequently by all the Muhammadan peoples), *istisqā*, "craving for drink," while the sufferer is called *mustasqī*, both forms belonging to the tenth conjugation of the root *saqa*, "he gave drink to." So in quite modern times a need has arisen for an equivalent in Arabic to the European term "Orientalist," and this has been met by taking the regularly-formed participle of the tenth, or desiderative, conjugation of the root *sharq*, "the East," and coining the derivative *mustashriq*, which can only mean "one who desires" or "is interested in the East." These instances will suffice to show the facility wherewith new ideas can be denoted in Arabic by forms which, hitherto unused, precisely and unmistakably indicate the idea to be expressed."[1]

ARABIC IN RELATION TO OTHER ISLAMIC LANGUAGES

The Arabic language also possesses supreme importance, though in a varying degree, for the

1. E G. Browne, *A Literary History of Persia*, vol. ii, pp. 7-8. (Cambridge University Press, 1928).

study of most of the subsidiary languages of Islam, such as Persian, Turkish, Urdu, Swahili, Malay, etc. No thorough study of these languages and of the literatures enshrined in them, is possible without a knowledge of Arabic language and literature. These languages have not only adopted the Arabic script[1] but have also borrowed a large part of the Arabic vocabulary. The language of every people who embraced Islam was inundated from the first with Arabic words, first the technical terms of theology and jurisprudence, then the terminology of all the nascent sciences known to the Muslim civilization, and lastly a mass of ordinary words, which have often entirely displaced the native equivalents.

The Arabic literature has also more or less profoundly influenced the forms of literary expression throughout the Islamic world. "It is certain that no satisfactory knowledge of the languages, literatures and modes of thought of Persia, Turkey, Mohammadan India or any other

1. On the extensive employment of the Arabic script by many different peoples all over the world, see the interesting monograph of Abdul Fattah Ebada, *Intishār al-Khaṭṭ al-'Arabi fi'l-'Ālam al-Sharqi wa'l-'Ālam al-Gharbi* (Cairo, 1915), or its French version by M.T. Sutton : *L'Extension de l'ecriture arabe dans le monde orientale et le monde occidentale.*

Muslim land is possible without a considerable knowledge of Arabic, and that our appreciation and enjoyment of these literatures grows in direct ratio to this knowledge."[1]

RELATIONS OF ARABIC AND PERSIAN

The influence of Arabic has been particularly profound upon Persian language and literature. When the Arabs conquered Persia in the seventh century, deep and lasting changes gradually took place alike in the religion, the language, the literature, the life and thought of the Persians. In the pregnant words of Nöldeke, "Hellenism never touched more than the surface of Persian life; but Iran was penetrated to the core by Arabian religion and Arabian ways." During the two centuries immediately succeeding the Arab invasion, the language of the conquerors was almost the sole literary medium employed in Persia; and even afterwards it still remained the language of theology, philosophy and science, and to a large extent also of diplomacy, polite society and *belles-lettres*. The renaissance of Persian letters, therefore, perforce took place under the dominant influence of Arabic literary forms and conven-

1. Prof. E.G. Browne in his *Literary History of Persia*, vol. ii, p. 8.

tions. The Persians gave up the old Pahlavi script, and adopted in its place the Arabic alphabet. The Arabic influence, though strongest in theology and jurisprudence, extended also to grammar, rhetoric, prosody, and all the sciences known to the Muslims. The Persian poets not only borrowed ideas from Arabic poets, but also modes of expressions and metres which were current among the latter; while the language of the poets as well as that of the prose-writers was inundated with Arabic words and phrases.[1]

Modern Persian thus emerged and its literary forms developed under the direct and dominant influence of Arabic literature. A knowledge of Arabic language and literature is, therefore, indispensable for a proper understanding of the development of Persian literature and thought, and this is well illustrated by the personal experience of the late Professor E. G. Browne (1862-1926), who thus wrote in his *Literary History of Persia* (vol. i, p. 90): "I began my Oriental

1. See in this connection the admirable monograph of Dr. U. M. Daudpota, *The Influence of Arabic Poetry on the Development of Persian Poetry* (Bombay, 1934), wherein the learned author has successfully and convincingly shown, with numerous examples, the multiplicity of ideas and literary forms borrowed by Persian poets from Arabic poets.

studies with Turkish, and was soon driven to Persian, since from the Persians the Turks borrowed their culture and literary forms. Soon I found that without a knowledge of the Arabic language and literature and of the Arabian civilization and culture, one could never hope to be more than a smatterer in Persian." The Persians are fully conscious of the truth contained in the observation of Professor Browne; for we find that Arabic is studied as a compulsory secondary language in all Persian schools.

Since the Persians have used the Arabic language as a medium of literary expression, especially during the earlier centuries of Arab rule, a knowledge of the Arabic language is necessary for anyone who desires to acquaint himself at first-hand with the spiritual and intellectual manifestations of that talented race. To ignore the Arabic writings of Persian authors would be to ignore some of the most important and characteristic manifestations of the Persian genius. A knowledge of Arabic is, therefore, necessary for the study of the literature and intellectual history of the Persians, so that in the principal universities of the world, students with-

out a good working knowledge of Arabic, are not considered qualified to undertake higher Persian studies.

The Persian language in the earlier stages of its development did not possess adequate power of literary expression, as is shown by the strictures passed on it by al-Birūnī in his *Kitāb al-Ṣaidala.*[1] The Persian genius, however, gradually succeeded in raising it to the status of a literary language, capable of dealing with almost all branches of human knowledge. It rose to this position mainly through the unrestricted use of the Arabic vocabulary, which it borrowed in plenty without any reserve.

Although after several centuries of Arab domination, the Persians succeeded in reasserting their national independence, their language had become so thoroughly permeated with Arabic words that it could never divest itself of these elements, which, by long usage and familiarity, had become a part and parcel of it. It is astonishing to find what a large number of Arabic words are in current use in Persian; and to write

1. The remarks of al-Birūnī are given in their original Arabic in the Appendix to this booklet.

Persian devoid of any admixture of Arabic is at least as difficult as to write English without employing Greek, Latin or French derivatives. It can be done within certain limits, but the result is generally incomprehensible without the aid of a dictionary.[1]

"It is sometimes asserted that the *Shahnama* contains practically no Arabic words. This is incorrect: Firdawsi avoided their use as far as possible in his Epic, because he felt them to be unsuitable to the subject of his poem, but even in his time many Arabic words had become so firmly established in the language that it was impossible to avoid their use."[2]

A movement has been afoot in present-day Persia in the garb of nationalism to efface, as far as possible, all traces of Arab influence from the various spheres of national life. It also seeks, as a part of its programme, to purge the Persian language of Arabic elements. This part of the programme does not, however, seem to have succeeded to any considerable extent. The movement, the real strength of which has been

1. *Cf.* E. G. Browne, *A Literary History of Persia*, vol. ii, pp. 5-6.

2. Ibid., vol. ii, p. 145.

variously estimated by various observers, may have produced in the sphere of literature curiosities like *Nāma-e-Khusrawān* of Prince Jalāl, which, owing to the forced employment of obsolete and little-known words of Persian origin, is hardly intelligible even to an average literate Persian,[1] but the movement does not appear to have otherwise achieved any solid results. If we take up a Persian periodical, journal or book, not specially written by a propagandist or a nationalist crank, we shall find that the proportion of Arabic words used in it is as large as ever.[2]

RELATIONS OF ARABIC AND TURKISH LANGUAGES

Like other languages of the Muslim peoples, Ottoman Turkish too has been deeply influenced

1. It is a short history of pre-Islamic dynasties of Persia, published at Vienna in 1297 A.H. (1880 A.C.). There is also a lithographed reprint of it published at Lahore.

2. A Literary Academy which has recently come into existence under the auspices of the Government of Persia, under the name of *Farhangistān-i-Irān*, with the object of preserving and promoting the Persian language, has however made some sensible suggestions for the replacement of some Arabic words by Persian equivalents, which are equally familiar and intelligible. See in this connection, Prof. Dr. Muhammad Iqbal's valuable article, *Farhangistān-i-Irān*, in the *Oriental College Magazine* (Lahore) for May, 1942.

by the Arabic language and the general Islamic cultural elements. The Turks, in the first instance, borrowed their culture and literary forms from the Persians, but since the Persian literature itself had developed under the direct influence of Arabic, Arabic vocabulary and literary forms passed over into Turkish through the medium of Persian. It has been estimated that the Arabic and Persian words in the Turkish literary language are more than fifty per cent of its total current vocabulary.[1]

Under the Saljūq Turks of Asia Minor, literary works were written partly in Arabic and partly in Persian; while Arabic was predominant as the language of religion and higher education. Arabic was also used in inscriptions, legal documents, *waqf*-deeds and in correspondence with contemporary Muslim sovereigns. The influence of Persian was still greater: it was used at the courts of the Sultans and of various princes and nobles, for whom Persian poetry in particular had a special appeal.

The Ottoman Sultans, who came after the Saljūqs, were generous patrons of art and learn-

1. *Cf.* **Maximilian Bittner,** *Der Einfluss des Arabischen und Persischen auf das Türkische. Eine Philologische Studie.* **Wien, 1900.**

ing; while their viziers and nobles followed their example in the matter. Along with other literary activity, innumerable books on all subjects were translated from Arabic and Persian into Turkish. Arabic and Persian works naturally served the Turkish writers as literary models, and influenced them greatly in the choice of words and the formation of their literary style.

Owing to religious contacts and religious needs, Arabic influence was continuous and persistent in its operation throughout Turkish history. Islamic law had been in force in the Turkish Empire from its very beginnings. A knowledge of Arabic language was, therefore, necessary for anyone who wanted to study Muslim law (*Fiqh*) and get an appointment as a judge (*qāḍī*) or any other religious functionary. The Arabic influence grew still stronger, as the Turkish sovereignty spread southwards over the Arabic-speaking countries; and when Egypt was incorporated within the Turkish Empire in the reign of Sultan Salīm I, the literary relations between Stambul and Cairo—which had become the intellectual centre of the Arabic world after the fall of Baghdad—became all the closer. A large number of

Arabic scholars flocked to the Turkish capital, where they received munificent patronage, and which in consequence became a flourishing centre of Arabic learning. It is, therefore, no wonder that after centuries of ceaseless literary activity the libraries of Stambul are surprisingly rich in rare and unique Arabic manuscripts, the value of which is beyond all compute.

The Turks themselves have produced a number of eminent Arabic scholars, such as Quṭlū-bughā, Tāshköprü Zāde, the author of *Shaqā'iq al-Nu'māniya* and *Miftāḥ al-Sa'ādah*, Munajjim Bāshī, the author of *Jāmi' ul-Duwal*, and Hājji Khalīfa, the author of *Kashf al-Ẓunūn*, along with scores of other savants, whose Arabic works gained wide fame and currency throughout the Muslim world. Their names and the titles of their works will be found in Brockelmann's *Geschichte der arabischen Litteratur*; Franz Babinger: *Die Geschichtsschreiber der Osmanen und ihre Werke* (Leipzig, 1926), and in the authoritative and comprehensive outline of Turkish literature, given by Köprülü Zāde Meḥmed Fu'ād, in *The Encyclopædia of Islam*, vol. iv, pp. 938-959.

Uighūr alphabet and language survived for

some time from the pre-Islamic times among the Muslim Turks; but, owing to the adoption of many Arabic and Persian words and the general Islamic influence, the Uighūr alphabet gradually fell into disuse, and Arabic script took its place in the writing of the Turkish language. The Arabic alphabet came into use for writing Turkish at a fairly early period, as is evidenced by the Anatolian documents of the 13th century. The Turkish literature, produced during several centuries past, is therefore entirely in the Arabic script; and a knowledge of it is consequently necessary for anyone who desires to study it in it's original form, for it is vain to expect that this vast literature can ever be transferred into the Latin script, which has been compulsorily introduced in Turkey by the Government law of November 1st, 1928.

The Turks, in their excess of reformist zeal, have abolished the Arabic script, but they cannot undo the work of centuries. The Arabic element in the Turkish language is as large as ever. To take an example at random, out of the four words (*Türkye Büyük Millet Meclisi*), inscribed above the Turkish National Assembly Hall at Ankara,

two are Arabic.[1] It is highly significant of the deep and persistent influence of Arabic on Turkish life to note that during the period of *Tanẓīmāt* (Reforms) in the last century, when European influence was most pronounced in all spheres of Turkish life, recourse was perforce had to the vast resources of the Arabic language in translating technical terms from French and other Western languages, with the result that whereas the national literature and life were being Europeanized in spirit and general outlook, the literary language itself was at the same time being enriched with words of Arabic provenance.

In view of these and other considerations, it will not perhaps be rash on our part to say that, if the extremists in the Turkish ranks succeeded in divesting themselves of Arabic-Islamic cultural elements, they would be left nothing more than the black tents, in which their rude ancestors came from the steppes of Central Asia. The late Professor Paul Casanova (d. 1926) related in his Inaugural Lecture an anecdote told him by a Syrian gentleman, which admirably illustrates

1. For a photograph of the Turkish National Assembly, bearing the inscription referred to above, see *The Encyclopædia of Islam, Supplement*, opposite p. 22 (Leiden and London, 1938).

our point of view. An old Arab shaikh sat chatting one day in a *café* with a number of Turks. The latter were decrying the Arab race, exclaiming again and again: "The Arabs are a faithless people; they do not know what honour is." The Arab shaikh calmly asked them: "What is the Turkish word for honour?" They replied: 'Irḍ (عرض), pronounced as eurz,—"Any other word?"—"No, we have no other word for honour."—"No other word! But this word does not belong to you; it is one of the oldest words of our ancient language. If the Arabs do not know what honour is, then how about your ancestors, who never conceived the idea, when they were wandering in the deserts of Central Asia?"[1] The moral of the story is that whereas neither the Arabs nor the Turks are, in fact, without the sense of honour and self-respect, the

1. Paul Casanova in his *Lecon d'ouverture*, 26 avril, 1909, printed in his booklet, *L'Enseignement de l'Arabe au Collége de France* (Paris, 1910). The above anecdote may be supplemented by the following amusing passage from D'Ohsson, *Tableau de l'Empire Ottoman* (p. 373): 'Ceux qui ont pretendu que le mot d'honneur n'existe pas dans la langue des Othmans, n ont prouvé que leur parfaite ignorance ... Comment n'ont-ils pas connu les mots d'irz, de nemouz (lire: namous), de schann, de scheuhreth qui repondent a ceux d'honneur, de dignité, de réputation, de considération?"—Now, all these four words are Arabic and not Turkish!

Turks on entering the sphere of Islam were so completely surrounded by Arabo-Persian influences that they could not help drawing upon the current speech, which was saturated with words of Arabic origin, with the result that they forgot to a very considerable extent the characteristic vocabulary of their ancestors and adopted in its place Arabic equivalents, which bore the hall-mark of dignity and superior culture.

ARABIC ELEMENT IN THE ROMANCE LANGUAGES

The Arabs ruled over Spain for eight hundred years, held important centres of population in southern France for a long time and penetrated as far as the heart of France and the foot of the Alps (Piedmont, Savoy, etc.). They also ruled over Sicily for two centuries, and occupied some parts of sourthern Italy (Brindist, Bari and Tarente) for a considerable period. This long contact with Arab rule and Arab culture has naturally left a deep impress upon the languages of these countries. There are, accordingly, hundreds of Arabic words in the Romance languages (Spanish, Portuguese, Provençal, French and Italian), besides a large number of place-names

(towns, villages, farms, castles, rivers, springs, etc), which are evidently of Arabic origin. The borrowed Arabic words are in most cases nouns, which stand for ideas and objects (*e.g.*, cotton, sugar, etc.), introduced by the Arabs. There is also a large number of loan-words, relating to the various sciences and arts, which the Arabs transmitted to Mediæval Europe. Moreover, the Romance words borrowed from Arabic include some of the commonest objects of daily life.[1]

1. For the Arabic element in the Romance languages in general, see W. Meyer-Lübke, *Einführung in das Studium der Romanischen Sprachwissenschaft* (3rd ed. Heidelberg, 1920); and for the different forms which individual Arabic words have assumed in the various Romance languages, consult the same author's *Romanisches Etymologisches Wörterbuch* (3rd ed., Heidelberg). For further detailed information, the student may refer to the following special dictionaries:

(*a*) Spanish and Portuguese: R. Dozy and W. H. Engelmann. *Glossaire des mots espagnols et portugais dérivés de l'arabe*, 2nd ed. (Leiden 1869); D. L. de Eguilaz, *Glosario etimologico de las palabras espanoles de origen oriental* (Granada, 1886); C Defremery, *Des mots espagnols et portugais dérivés de l'arabe*, in *J. Asiatique*, 1869; *Diccionario de la lengua espanola*, published by the Royal Academy of Spain, 15th ed (Madrid, 1925); and Prof. J. B Trend's chapter on 'Spain and Portugal' in *The Legacy of Islam* (Oxford, 1931).

(*b*) French: A. P. Pihan, *Dictionnaire étymologique des mots de la langue française dérivés de l'arabe, du persan ou du turc* (Paris, 1866); M Devic, *Dictionnaire étymologique des mots française dérivés de l'arabe* (Paris, 1876), also republished in *Supplément* to E. Littré's *Dictionnaire de la langue française* (Paris, 1923); and H. Lammens,

The influence of the Arabic language, however, is not confined to the Romance languages only; words of Arabic origin are found more or less in other European languages as well.[1] Moreover, the interest attaching to these borrowed words is not limited to the field of philology alone; they are of the highest import for the history of culture, for they indicate the objects and ideas introduced for the first time into Europe by the Arabs and remind us of the debt, often forgotten or only grudgingly acknowledged, which modern civilization owes to that gifted race.

THE FUTURE OF THE ARABIC LANGUAGE

The future of the Arabic language naturally depends to a large extent upon the future life of

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Remarques sur les mots française dérivés de l'arabe (Beyrouth, 1890).

(*c*) Italian: F. Lasinio, *Delle voci italiane di origine orientale* (Florence, 1887); G. de Gregorio and Chr. F. Seybold, *Glossario delle voci siciliane di origine araba* (in *Studi glottologici italiani*), Palermo, 1903.

1. See in this connection, W. Taylor, *Arabic Words in English* (Oxford, 1933); E. Littmann, *Morgenländische Wörter im Deutschen*, 2nd ed., pp. 59-102 (Tübingen, 1924); and K. Lokotsch, *Etymologisches Wörterbuch der europäischen Wörter orientalischen Ursprungs* (Heidelberg, 1927).

the Arabic-speaking peoples. We have no doubt about its continuous use in the Arab world and its continued study as their religious language among the Muslim peoples all over the globe. But will it grow and develop in response to the needs and demands of a changing world? Is it capable of expressing the ideas and concepts of modern science and modern thought? Although we do not wish to give a hasty answer to this question, we have, nevertheless, strong reasons to believe that Arabic is capable of meeting the needs of the changing Arabic society and of serving as a medium of modern science and thought. The language which could convey the meaning of Plato and Aristotle in the past, should not, I think, fail to express the thought of Bergson and Einstein in the present age.

A mere glance at its past history is enough to inspire us with hope, which is founded upon its vast resources and its proven potentialities. Who could have imagined at the advent of Islam that Arabic, which had hitherto been the language of uncouth bedouins and possessed no literature worth the name except the poetry of the desert bards, would soon develop into the medium

of a flourishing and advanced civilization and would serve as a satisfying vehicle of both religious and scientific thought ? And yet the miracle did happen. Arabic was not only successfully employed in the Qur'an to express the concepts and contents of a new religious ideology, almost at complete variance with the old ways of Arab thinking, but in the course of a century or two it also succeeded in assimilating and incorporating the entire intellectual legacy of the ancient world —the science and philosophy of Greece, the wisdom of ancient Persia and the astronomy and mathematics of ancient India. Besides, when the records of the government offices in Iraq, Syria and Egypt were transferred to the Arabic language, it was found that it could also be successfully used as the language of state administration. Arabic, thus, became the vehicle and medium of Islamic civilization, capable of serving all human interests and of meeting the needs of all classes of society, Muslim and non-Muslim alike.

If Arabic has successfully met a serious challenge in the past, is it too much to expect that it will succeed in meeting a similar challenge at

the present juncture ? The development which it has already undergone in recent times in respect of its vocabulary, diction and style encourages us in the hope that it will not fail and disappoint us in the future and that it will be able to express the contents of modern science and thought in a suitable and effective manner.[1] Modern Europe (and America too) has after all derived its spiritual and intellectual sustenance mainly from two sources, viz. (1) Palestine and (2) the classical world of Greece and Rome. It has received its religion from ancient Palestine, and its science and philosophy from ancient Greece. And, as everybody knows, Palestine and Greece have not been entirely foreign to the past experience of the Arabic language. On the contrary, it has had close relations with both of them. As a matter of fact, a large part of the legacy of ancient Greece was transmitted to Europe during the Middle Ages through the medium of Arabic. The spirit of modern Europe is, therefore, not so

1. Professor Margoliouth had already discerned at the beginning of the present century that Arabic "is undergoing a renaissance. and there is every likelihood of its again becoming a great literary vehicle." (See the *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* for 1905, p. 418).

foreign and not so incomprehensible to the Arab mind as some people imagine it to be. In fact, in several respects both of them have common roots and common sources of inspiration. In view of these undeniable historical facts, I feel strongly inclined to think that Modern Europe is not beyond the comprehension of the Arabs, and as a corollary of this proposition their language, too, is not incapable of expressing the thought of Modern Europe.

As regards the changes within the Arabic society itself, it may be safely predicted that Arabic will be able to meet the new demands as successfully as it has done in the past. The strong love which the Arabs entertain for their language and the legitimate pride which they take in it are a sure guarantee against its disintegration or any possibility of neglect on their part.

The future of the Arabic language is also assured by another powerful factor. The Arabic-speaking peoples and countries, which extend from the banks of the Tigris to the shores of the Atlantic, have no other common means of communication except Arabic. In order to maintain their cultural unity, they are compelled to pre-

serve and cultivate it as their sole means of communication and mutual understanding. It has served them a highly useful purpose in the past and may be relied upon to perform the same function in the future. In fact, the Arabic language does not need the Arabs so much as the Arabs themselves sorely need it for their cultural unity and national solidarity.

Moreover, the Arabic language is not without friends in this wide world. It has always had friends and admirers even outside the Arab sphere. It has a mysterious power of fascinating persons of the most diverse races and regions. If, in the past, Bīrunī and Zamakhsharī have fallen under its spell in Khwarizm, a Shanqīṭī has been equally susceptible to its charms in the distant Senegal. Coming down to modern times and modern Europe, it is a pleasure to notice the remarkable scholarly devotion of De Sacy, Lane and Fleischer—to pick out at random only three illustrious names out of a host of devoted and zealous Arabists at the risk of looking invidious in this selection. The Arabic language is studied at the present time in many universities and seats of learning in Europe and America with great diligence and enthusiasm; and I venture to think

that this language, in spite of its peculiar difficulties and intricacies, has not failed to find a place in the hearts and the affection of those who are engaged in learning or teaching it. Let us hope that our esteemed colleagues in the West will continue its study with their customary and usual zeal, not merely as a dry philological discipline, but as the chief medium of a civilization, which has a definite place in the history of mankind and with which they are connected by so many historical associations and literary links. I also venture to hope that its study will create a bridge of mutual understanding and respect between the East and the West. Bonds of common humanity already exist, but it still remains for us to recognize and respect them.

It is plain to see from the foregoing pages that the Arabic language as a means of expression and a medium of human thought has been repeatedly put to the test and was confronted a number of times with serious challenges. The first challenge came when it was employed to express the ideas and concepts of a new ideology in the Qur'ān. The second challenge came in the Umayyad period, when the official records in the conquered countries had to be translated into

the language of the rulers. The third challenge came in the Abbasid age, when it was called upon to assimilate and incorporate the sciences and philosophy of the ancient world, especially those of Greece. Although the nature of the challenge differed from time to time, it is a matter of common knowledge that in each and every case Arabic came out with flying colours. Will it fail us at the present juncture? So far as I am concerned, its previous marvellous record leaves no room for doubt that it is capable of meeting every challenge in the future. I have reasons to think that there are many other persons who share my belief and my hope, which are based on solid grounds.

In the above pages, we have been considering the future of the Arabic language and its potentialities from various points of view; and before leaving this subject I should like to make my final observation on the question under discussion. The Arabic language has its greatest and strongest bulwark in the Qur'ān. So long as this Book endures and lives in the hearts and minds of the Faithful, Arabic is assured of a continuous and uninterrupted life.

EPILOGUE

In Pakistan there is need of a wider knowledge of Arabic, need of persons who will read the great collections of Arabic books that remain untouched on the shelves of so many public and private libraries in this country. There is need of a class of serious students, who would devote themselves to the study of Arabic literature as the enduring monument of a great civilization, and then present both its substance and spirit to the public at large, so as to make it a part of the common stock of human knowledge. And what an attraction there is in this vast and valuable literature of thirteen centuries that touches on every theme of human thought and activity. There is hardly any subject within the whole range of human interest to which some part of Arabic literature has not made its contribution. Moreover, it possesses characteristics peculiar to itself, which commend it to a very special place among the literatures of the world—and this expressed through the medium of a language of marvellous richness, power of expression and subtlety. A person who cares to acquaint himself with Arabic literature, comes in contact with

a culture based upon certain ideas of law, ethics and social order that have played a great part in the world as civilizing forces, and are still capable of acting as powerful regenerative factors in the uplift of humanity.[1] There is little doubt that the study of Arabic authors is bound to enlarge our sympathies by introducing us into a new world of life and thought, and is best calculated to give us a real understanding of the civilization which they represent. This true understanding in its turn would certainly tend to promote mutual harmony between various countries, communities and creeds which is the most urgent need of the present age.

1. Professor Arnold J. Toynbee, the world-renowned British historical thinker, says "We can discern certain principles of Islam which, if brought to bear on the social life of the new cosmopolitan proletariat, might have important salutary effects on 'the great society' in a nearer future. Two conspicucus sources of danger—one psychological and the other material—in the present relations of this cosmopolitan proletariat with the dominant element in our modern Western society are race consciousness and alcohol; and in the struggle with each of these evils the Islamic spirit has a service to render which might prove, if it were accepted, to be of high moral and social value. The extinction of race consciousness as between Muslims is one of the outstanding moral achievements of Islam, and in the contemporary world there is a crying need for the propagation of this Islamic virtue." (*Civilization on Trial*, p. 205).

APPENDIX

قال ابوالريحان محمد بن احمد البيرونى فى كتاب الصيد لهٔ :-

وَ الیٰ لسانِ العربِ نُقِلتِ العُلومُ مِنْ اَقطارِ العالمِ فَازْدَانَتْ وَ حَلّتْ فِى الْاَفئدةِ و سَرَتْ محاسنُ اللّغةِ منها فى الشّرايينِ وَ الْاَوْرِدَةِ وَ انْ كانَتْ كلُّ اُمّةٍ تَستَحْلِي لغتَها الّتِي آلَفتْها وَ اعْتادَتْها وَ اسْتعمَلتْها فِى مآربِها مَع الّافِها وَ اَشكالِها وَ اَقيسُ هذا بنفسِى وَ هِى مطبوعةٌ علیٰ لغة لَو خُلد بها عِلمٌ لاَسْتغرب اِسْتغرابَ البعيرِ علَى الميزابِ وَ الزّرافة فِى العِرابِ ، ثمّ منتقلةً الى العربيّةِ والفارسيّةِ فانَا فِى كُلّ واحدةٍ دخيلٌ و متكلّفٌ ، و الهجوُ بالعربية اَحَبُّ الىّ مِنَ المدحِ بالفارسيّةِ وَ سيَعرِفُ مِصداقَ قولِى مَن تأمَّلَ كتَابَ علمٍ قد نُقِلَ الَى الفارسيِ كيف ذَهبَ رَونقُهُ، و كسفَ بالُه، وَ اسْوَدَّ وجهُه، وَ زَالَ الانتفاعُ به اِذْ لَا تَصلحُ هذهِ اللّغةُ الّا لِلْاَخبار الكِسرويّةِ وَالأسمارِ اللّيليّةِ +

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